Mr. Biehn’s Student Teaching Week Two Journal

Cooperating teacher: Mr. Brenner

Supervisor: Dr. Dammers

Day one, March 22nd

Today, Mrs. Cranmer was out for the day, taking a break from running their musical for a few months, so Mr. Brenner took over her Piano classes. The Piano classes were moving on in their projects and they were getting into playing 2nds and 3rds together or separately. Some of them have trouble holding out the full value of the note when they play the music. One of the students can play piano pretty well, but has trouble reading music. Every once in a while Mr. Brenner will allow some of the students to move on. I picked out some scores for the band class that I will eventually teach to the students. I will teach them on B day which involves the inclusion of the freshman classes. This is so that I can have the full band and give Mr. Brenner a chance on A day to focus on his music that he established with them already.

Day two, March 23rd

Today was the first day that I taught the Band class “Fanfare Majestic” by William Gordon. They were very attentive and quiet when I was talking. I only had to waive my hands a little to get them to listen up. When I stopped to explain something, there were only a couple of times when the trumpets or flutes would keep playing. I would just look at them and they would stop. They played through the piece fairly well, but there is much work to do. A lot of the rhythms were challenging them, intonation, and general dynamic of the piece. They seemed to like the piece, but most of them I felt were excited that I was just as relaxed as Mr. Brenner and not some stiff walking in and doing things totally different from what they are used to. I run the piece differently, but I am open to their responses, or even giggles, because I noticed they need some release of tension every once in a while.

Day three, March 24th

Today we had another meeting but this time it was about the lateness issue with 5th block which is the last block of the day. Some of the Piano students come late to class about 20 minutes. We were teamed up with the Language teachers for this meeting. They were discussing their problem with giving parents warnings about their students accumulating too many lateness points, so they sent out letters, but were getting no response and no improvement with the students. They wanted Mr. Brenner and Mr. Klein to come up with a new plan school wide for the 5th block issue. They were suggesting giving assignments to teachers in-between the first and second bell, to wait in the hallway at the ends and encourage or move the students along. The assistant principal Mrs. Georgia was leading the meeting. We also mentioned that when the students go to the bathroom or get a drink of water, they are going to the lunchroom instead to buy bottled soda or tea and get ships from the machines. We talked about locking the doors during 5th block since there is not any lunch during that time. They are not permitted to have those types of drinks or any drinks and snacks in the classroom.

Day four, March 25th

Today was another meeting involving future plans to make research exciting for students and teachers. I was totally confused and lost with this meeting, but it seemed like the teachers did not care for the meeting because they received word of how many positions were going to get rifted. The number peaked at 130 including supervisors, principals, aids, and teachers. Nobody was paying close attention to the meeting and the fellow leading it was too energized for their taste in mood that day. I liked his first slide because he had “Overcoming the Dark Side”, “Overcoming the Knights who say Neit”, and “Overcoming the Nazis with Indiana Jones”. It grabbed my attention and also let me know what kind of character the guy is leading the meeting. He’s alright in my book just for having those pictures and comments in his presentation. Other than that, I was lost on the making research interesting and adventurous. Today was another B day and I taught more of the piece with the Band. I was limited this time, because Mr. Brenner was talking to the students about the switch from Yamaha to Cavalcade Bands. The students were excited and they kept asking questions about competitions, judges, and which show they are doing for the next season. When I taught the piece, I went over the first section up to measure 28 and focused on more rhythms, the percussion section, trumpets, and saxophones. The flutes and the clarinets are my stronger sections. I also tried to get them to follow more dynamics in the piece and to get a feel for having their parts come out more when they have moving lines.

Day five, March 26th

Today, I filled in on the trombone part again but for new marching music that they are going to play for Memorial Day. He handed out “America the Beautiful”, and “1812 Overture”. The band did fairly well sight reading the pieces and were excited to be playing them for Memorial Day. The Piano classes took their week test review and were ready to move on into playing 4ths and 5ths for the next week together and separately. Monday, I will start them on that lesson and take them through in the book to the piece “Jingle Bells”. It is not the appropriate time in the year, but they have block scheduling and plus, I have to follow along with the book. The song will be the leading factor in getting them to play chords the following week after Spring break.